

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5054

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T LONDON 12385

EXDIS

KUWAIT ALSO FOR MUSCAT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, IR, MU

SUBJECT: SHAH'S VIEWS ON IRANIAN ROLE IN OMAN

REF: STATE 196614; TEHRAN 7057

1. ROLE OF IRANIANS IN OMAN WAS MENTIONED IN PASSING DURING COLONEL MALONEY'S BRIEFING OF BRITISH FCO OFFICIALS OCTOBER 12. (MOST OF DISCUSSION SUMMARIZED SEPARATELY BY MEMCON.) MALONEY SAID HE FOUND IRANIAN COLONEL IN COMMAND QUITE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT LOCAL SITUATION AND MYRIAD OF OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES IT PRESENTS TO BRITISH WHO ARE PRINCIPAL COORDINATORS AND ADVISERS. MALONEY OPINED THAT COLONEL MUST BE KEEPING IRANIAN GOVERNMENT PRETTY WELL APPRISED OF SITUATION.

2. IRANIAN CONTINGENT IS CERTAINLY WELL EQUIPPED (EVEN PERHAPS A BIT TOO MUCH SO IN VIEW SPARE EQUIPMENT OF OTHER TROOPS IN OMAN) AND COLONEL TOLD MALONEY THAT ON PERSONAL ORDERS OF SHAH HE GETS ANYTHING HE ASKS FOR IN SUPPORT FROM HOME.

3. NEVERTHELESS, IRANIAN COLONEL ALSO TOLD MALONEY THAT SHAH HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO FOLLOW ORDERS AND NOT
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EXPRESS PERSONAL OPINIONS ON THE WAR. THE WAR IS AND SHOULD BE TREATED AS A BRITISH SHOW. WHILE COLONEL KEEPS CAREFUL REIN ON HIS SOMETIMES ENTHUSIASTIC TROOPS NOT TO TAKE UNNECESSARY RISKS, HE OBEYS ORDERS OF HIGHER COMMAND

IMPLICITLY.

4. COMMENT: QUESTION OF EXTENT AND LEVEL TO WHICH IRANIAN COLONEL REPORTS HIS UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFICULTIES FACING BRITISH IN THIS WAR COULD NOT BE INVESTIGATED AUTHORITATIVELY BY MALONEY ON THE SPOT. WE WONDER IF COLONEL AND SUBORDINATE OFFICERS ARE SO IMPRESSED BY OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES (AND POLITICAL RESTRAINTS ON RISK-TAKING IMPOSED BY BRITISH) THAT THEY ACCENTUATE THE NEGATIVE IN THEIR REPORTS BACK HOME (PER TEHRAN 7057). ALTERNATIVELY, WE WONDER IF COLONEL HAS INDEED BEEN ALLOWED TO REPORT AS FULLY AS MAY BE DESIRABLE AT HIGH ENOUGH LEVEL IN IRANIAN GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY IF HE WERE TYPE WHO COULD BALANCE DIFFICULTIES AGAINST ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN REALISTIC FASHION. ADDRESSEES WILL BE BEST JUDGES OF THAT.

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